

**From the DJ Booth**  
 by Tim 'DJ TJ' Johnson  
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# Helpful Hustle Hints

An article of hints on the couples dance, Hustle.

## About Hustle

Hustle is a smooth dance consisting of fun and exciting patterns, elegant arm styling and plenty of turns. Many patterns are completed in just 3 beats of music. With many other dances giving us 6 or 8 beats of music to complete a pattern, I can guess why this dance is called Hustle.

Hustle is made up of:

- Slotted moves
- Moves that travel

It's fun and interesting to read various writings on the history of Hustle. Hustle seems to have originated in the 1970's.



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## Hustle Styles

There are several styles of Hustle (the couples dance). The best dancers strive to develop their own unique style within the dance. The dance is known by several names: Latin Hustle, New York Hustle, Detroit Hustle, LA Hustle, 3 Count Hustle, and so on.

variations or musical preferences, and others are just different names for the same dance.

In a conversation with Gary Ulaner, Gary explained that LA Hustle is basically New York Hustle as taught by LA instructors.

From my perspective, each of these are branches of the same dance tree. Some of the branch names may indicate local

## Counting Hustle

Music Count	&	Down Beat	&	Up Beat	&	Down Beat	&	Up Beat	&	Down Beat	&	Up Beat	&	Down Beat	&	Up Beat
Detroit Count		1		2	&	3		4		5	&	6		(1)		(2)
New York Count		(2)		(3)	&	1		2		3	&	1		2		3
DJ TJ Count		Walk		Walk	Check	Step		Walk		Walk	Check	Step		Walk		Walk

There is more than one way to count Hustle. New York Hustle is typically counted "& 1 2 3" whereas Detroit Hustle is typically counted "1 2 & 3".

I find it easier to stay in sync with the music if I extend the count to 6. With the extended Detroit count, this allows the leader to step left and the follower to step right on each 1 in sync with the down beat, such as in most other dances.

A quick study of the chart above shows that these are two different ways of counting the same steps.



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## Enhanced Smoothness

During the '6 3' of Detroit Count or the '6 1' of the New York Count, it is essential that both partners work together for a smooth transition.

Let's start by investigating the Check Step. The Check Step offers the quickest and shortest direction change, with the dancer's center changing direction 1/4 of the way to the receiving foot.

With many moves in Hustle, the Check Step allows the center of each dancer to stay closer together, for a smoother dance, as compared with a Break Step where the center changes direction at the 1/2 way point, or the Rock Step where the center changes direction 2/3 of the way to the receiving foot.

One of my competitive secrets in Hustle is to maintain some degree of bend in my lead arm, or follow arm during the Check Step. This allows us to stretch the arms as our centers move slightly away from each other for a smooth transition. During the Check Step, if I were to dance with a straight or stiff lead arm, or straight or stiff follow arm when following, if there is a push, pull, or hesitation from my partner, everyone will see it.

### About Me...

For over 9 years, I have worked to develop, nurture, and serve the Swing, Hustle, Ballroom, and Country dance communities in a fun and friendly way.

I enjoy the ongoing effort of promoting dance, hosting dances, teaching, DJ'ing, and social dancing with dancers of all levels.

For the Check Step, followers can place their right foot slightly back on the 'Check' and then place their left foot slightly forward for the 'Step', for a very responsive, great feeling follow.

Followers can also choose other foot placements during the 'Check Step'. By minimizing movement of the center, smoothness can be maintained.

Followers who step back during the 'Check' and in place for the 'Step', who allow their center to travel back, tend to feel somewhat heavy and less responsive.

Followers who step in place during the 'Check' and then forward on the 'Step,' who allow their center to move forward, tend to be very light. Care must be taken not to dance out of the connection.

Careful foot placement, minimizing away movement of your centers, and stretching the arms during the '6 3' of Detroit Count or the '6 1' of New York Count enhances the smoothness of many moves in Hustle.

On the national level, I enjoy providing the Dance Fanatics Pro Audio System and DJ Services at weekend events in such states as MI, OH, PA, WI, IN, & NY.

When I'm not working as a DJ or teaching, I enjoy social dancing and dancing in competitions.

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